

Course work on hr solution

Business, Company



1) Problem Statement: Sara Jones was appointed the managing director of Bake a Cake, a cake mix manufacturing company in the UK, three months ago. Sara learnt to adapt to the company's working culture and practices. The methods were not too different from her previous managerial roles so she had little trouble with this. She also took part in sessions on how to train staff as part of her management role. In order to gain a better understanding of Bake a Cake she decided to travel around the company's manufacturing and distribution factories to briefly observe how work was being completed in these departments. She found out that unbeknownst to the rest of management the workers were not utilizing the methods they were taught during training so she consulted HR for advice.

2) The main issues in Sarah Jones's situation are that learning strategies employed by Bake a Cake management are not being practiced in the factories and distribution centers and the staff members are not demonstrating the skills management believes they have. The fact that management is not aware that the staff members are not demonstrating the practices they were trained to perform conveys a severe breakdown in communication between the management and its staff members. The trust has either been lost from the relationship between management and staff members or it was never present. The fact that the staff members are following different practices to what they were taught is also a sign they have either lost motivation and a drive to progress and achieve within the company or there is a need for a top-up training course to remind them of the skills and knowledge they were taught.

The human resources team is responsible for the management of both the working environment as well as the management of the employed staff members. The HR system is based on the premise of the two broad aspects of work practices and employment practices. Through assessing the work practices it will be possible for HR to establish the impact that the organization of the factories' work itself is having on the workers and identify any associated problems that are also having an impact on the situation. This aspect of HR could also address any possible need for a change of management if required. Employment practices involve all the techniques employed to hire, deploy, motivate, consult, negotiate with, develop and retain employees as well as let staff go. Boxall, P., and Macky, K., (2007b)

The two main aspects of HR can be used to dramatically influence each individual employee's ability, motivation and opportunity to work to the best of their ability in their role. It is the job of the HR system to have a positive effect on staff members' know-how, skills, willingness to do their jobs to the best of their ability and the amount of opportunities for them to utilize their talents in the process. Boxall, P., and Macky, K., (2007b)

There are also more collective HR focuses such as a company's ability to organize, its working culture, social and psychological culture. The way in which HR influences management to deal with the employees' opinions and general voice is crucial with a need for Bake a Cake's staff members to be encouraged to trust management and fellow colleagues which would lead to the improvement of working relationships. The improvement of working relationships is likely to have a positive effect on the staff members' working

habits as good, trusting working relationships in collaboration with working incentives and empowerment are strong motivations. Boxall, P., and Macky, K., (2007b) HR management for global plastic producers, Riordan Manufacturing, confirms it looks to understand where its staff members' motivation comes from as it believes high employee motivation is the best way for any company to achieve creativity, productivity, high moral and minimal turnover. (Oppapers. com, 2011)

As a HR expert, one of the solutions I would look to work with in this situation is the high-performance work system (HPWs). A form of research; HPWs are managerial practice systems that help to motivate employees while developing their capabilities and desires to progress within the company. The three fundamental elements of HPWs are: performance, work practices and system effects. Researchers that use the HPWs normally concentrate on the economical aspects of staff members' performances. It is not logical for employers to pay more for this method than what the financial benefits are likely to be. This renders cost-effectiveness a crucial measurement of the success of this approach. However it is worth noting that ensuring that the financial outcome outweighs the costs will be a challenge. Boxall, P., and Macky, K., (2007a) The competitive elements of manufacturing should be prioritized by the entire company as well as human resource management aims for strategic business management to succeed. (Fernando C. A. Santos, 1980)

One problem that Bake a Cake will need to be careful to avoid is overlooking diverse business units, production systems and occupational groups. An

example often referred to is American study Huselids, which involved the assessment of 968 of public US firms in 1995. The research was conducted at company and organizational levels. A much less digital route would be the use of performance metrics chosen by management and established to be relevant to the company's production processes. Boxall, P., and Macky, K., (2007a)

This approach would be appropriate as it mainly focuses on the management of production workers in order to improve staff performance. This solution could also help with a fundamental element of rectifying the situation, which is to re-establish any lost links between HR and the Bake a Cake's staff performance, as well as determine the staff members' thought patterns, which are leading them to choose not to follow the company management's instructions. Boxall, P., and Macky, K., (2007a)

Another appropriate solution worth taking into consideration would be the 'lean production principles'. This is a form of HPW and has also been referred to as a 'high-involvement work system' (HIWs) and a 'high-commitment management' (HCM). This solution looks to change the amount of which the production staff is involved in the decision-making processes in relation to their work standards. This coupled with the results they are producing, which would in turn encourage the employees to take a greater interest in the company overall. Boxall, P., and Macky, K., (2007a)

However, the three principles of HPWs, HIWs and HCM are quite different despite the fact they are often linked. A high performance worker is likely to be committed and involved. Yet for this particular case at Bake a Cake it is

important to specify that a HIWs is also a relevant theory to apply as it is concerned with dealing with important changes in the working environment. It is also crucial to note that any research conducted needs to be concerned with the day-to-day processes that employees do adopt and determining their opinions, attitudes and aspirations in relation to Bake a Cake as a company. Boxall, P., and Macky, K., (2007a).

It will be necessary to look closely at the different teams in Bake a Cake's factories as the level of skills used and outcome in the workplace are heavily influenced by team performance which has been impacted by individual employee's skills, discretionary effort and opportunities in performing. Sufficient opportunities are indeed benefits to employees so the creation of these could potentially improve the situation. Management would get the chance to see if employees would be encouraged to challenge themselves and increase their skill sets. To properly review the impact of HPWSs Bake a Cake would also need to provide information about the company and the workers outcomes. Boxall, P., and Macky, K., (2007a)

Bake a Cake's practices would need to be assessed to ensure they are not in a demoralized or dysfunctional state. The research must look beyond the company's practices to take note of the systems and mediating variables which are influenced by the firm's set of processes. Boxall, P., and Macky, K., (2007a)

It is possible that in an extreme case a high-involvement work reform will be required to remove the responsibility of decision making and problem solving completely from management. This method could be used if the

management system is found to have broken down and stands a strong chance of being detrimental to the company's standards and profit. This move would also be an opportunity for Bake a Cake as a company to make better use of its staff members' self-management capabilities, personal advancement and ability to solve problems. This method would require the staff members to be subject to demanding, strict production targets and the degree of authority they reach and opportunities to learn would rarely ever match that which management would usually be entitled to. However as the staff members have not performed according to their training it is unlikely that they would be entitled to the complete autonomy as the method would enforce. Boxall, P., and Macky, K., (2007b)

Tesco is an example where employees have been made to understand their individual significance to the company by letting them know their individual contribution to Tesco core purposes and values. This is achieved through an induction program tailored to the staff members' different cultures, ways of learning and commitments to their jobs. (Business Teacher, 2003-2011)

The Bake a Cake case is clearly an example of the negative effects of a breakdown in communication, loss of trust and diminishment of the relationship between management and staff members. The solution would need to incorporate an investigation into why such a breakdown would occur from both the management and the staff members' sides. The solution would need to focus on the establishment of a productive working relationship between the management and staff members. Encouraging drive and motivation in the staff members is a crucial aspect of solving the Bake a

Cake working practices issue. If the staff members develop a desire to succeed and progress within Bake a Cake they will naturally develop a passion for the company, its methods and its profits. The desires of the staff members will be in line with the company's goals. In this way both the staff members and Bake a Cake will have the opportunity to achieve professional satisfaction.

References

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